

## My "Aha" Moments- An Intel Inspiring Story- J.Hettler

My first experience with Intel was the Master Teacher program. I attended a week long training in the summer of 2003. I was at a new district and I did not know anyone in my district, much less anyone at this area wide training. I told my husband that this was going to be just another one of those trainings where a lot was said but nothing ever changed. When they handed out the training book and I flipped through it I was a bit more interested. It seemed that there was some "meat" to the program. By lunch I was excited. This was my kind of program- in depth, well planned out and full of possibilities. By the time I got home that evening I was sold. My husband said I sounded like a commercial for Intel Teach to the Future (and that was just the first day)! I have not stopped singing the Intel praises to this day.

When I began the next school year (at my new school), I was told I needed to train my coworkers. They were less than excited about staying after school once a week to go through yet another program. They didn't know me very well either. We started the training and I met some resistance. I pressed on and followed the training exactly as it was written.

There was a math teacher who gave me a hard time. He constantly (and loudly) stated how this could never work in his classroom and he could not see how it related to math. I guided him through thinking about a project that would work for him but I was still met with resistance. I decided to press on and just let him stew. He was obviously a smart man and I guessed he would come around. About three weeks into our weekly meetings he came and talked to me during his conference period. I helped him brainstorm and he hit on a project idea. He decided that he would have his students take pictures of angles and develop a project based on those pictures. It was a 180 degree change. He got so excited that he had the students begin the project right away. By the time we finished the program he was sold. That math teacher was not the only teacher in the group that grew. It was a very powerful transformation of my peers.

The next session I held was in the summer. I had a group of teachers who worked in my district but not at my school. On the first day I noticed that one of the participants was a woman who seemed to have little confidence in herself. At the end of the first day I visited with her as we packed up and she told me her story. It was a sad story. She had worked her way out of a terrible home life which included living in a shelter. She earned her teaching certificate but she still felt like she was not as capable as the other teachers at her school (at this point she had taught for one year). As the classes went on I saw her change. She quickly picked up on the technology parts but struggled with the curriculum design aspects. About halfway through our sessions she came in early one day and she was glowing. She told me it finally clicked for her- she got it. She told me she had stayed up the night before making all kinds of notes on how she could teach using what she learned. On the day they received their certificates she was a

changed teacher. She returned to her school confident and ready to teach in a new way.

The experience in my own classroom was just as powerful. When I used the steps from the Intel Teach to the Future program as I prepared and taught my lessons, I was a much better teacher. I would love to say there was one defining lesson or moment but it was more of a shift. As the teacher I was more organized and felt better prepared for each day. My students had a clearer view of what I expected of them and of how the lessons worked together. When I modeled the projects for the students, the work they produced was so much higher quality. Project based learning was a reality in my classroom and it was the key I had not even known I needed.

I continue to develop and deliver professional development for teachers. As I do my workshops I follow the model I learned in the Teach to the Future program. I often refer back to the materials I received at that first training. I am guided by the idea that without 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers, there are no 21<sup>st</sup> century students. This program is so much more than technology training. It is solid curriculum training. It goes beyond the theories and really teaches how to develop meaning technology integration in the core subject areas. That is the real Aha! about this program- it is not really one moment but a series of moments. Every time I meet someone who has been through the program it is like finding a kindred spirit. I always say that if I was on a deserted island and needed to train teachers this is the one program I would use!